

## CONCUSSION PROTOCOL STEPS FOR RETURN TO PLAY

**Once you are *symptom-free*, you may progress the following day to the next step. Day 1 is the day following the 1st symptom-free day!**

Day 1) *NO* activity, complete rest. Stay home from school and no school work or studying.

Day 2-3) Light aerobic exercise such as walking or stationary cycling. No resistance training.

Day 4-5) Sport specific exercise – for example, skating and puck handling in hockey, running and ball skills in soccer (NO HEADING): football quarterbacks may resume sideline throwing. An important portion of this step is the addition of one set of low resistance or simple resistance training.

Day 6-7) Resume non-contact training drills; for example, walk-through pass blocking for football linemen. Add additional sets and higher intensity resistance training.

Day 8-9) Full contact *practice* after receiving medical clearance. Do not skip this important step.

Day 10) Game play

**If any post-concussion symptoms develop at any stage, drop back to the previous level and try to progress again after 24 hours. No medications may be taken at any step of the progression. This is to prevent masking a more serious underlying condition! You must check in with your athletic trainer every day *PRIOR* to practice!**

**Your trainer will give you a personalized copy of this paper on Day 1 with all of the dates listed for each specific day!**

### Head Injury Sheet

#### Information

A blow to the head can disrupt the normal function of the brain. Doctors often call this type of brain injury a “concussion” or a “closed head injury.” They may describe these injuries as “mild” because concussions are usually not life threatening. However, the effects of a concussion can be serious.

After a concussion, some people lose consciousness or are “knocked out” for a short time, but not always -- you can have a brain injury without losing consciousness. Some people are simply dazed or confused.

Because the brain is very complex, every brain injury is different. Some symptoms may appear right away, while others may not show up for days or weeks after the concussion. Sometimes the injury makes it hard for people to recognize or admit that they are having problems.

The signs of concussion are subtle. Early on, problems may be missed. People may look fine even though they are acting or feeling differently.

Because all brain injuries are different, so is recovery. Most people with mild injuries recover fully, but it can take time. Some symptoms can last for days, weeks, or longer.

People with a concussion need to be seen by a Doctor.

### Signs and Symptoms

Some of the symptoms of a concussion are:

- \_ Low-grade headaches that won't go away
- \_ Feeling light-headed or dizzy
- \_ Increased sensitivity to sounds or lights
- \_ Blurred vision
- \_ Ringing in the ears
- \_ Slowness in thinking, acting, speaking, or reading
- \_ Getting easily confused
- \_ Memory loss
- \_ Difficulty paying attention or concentrating
- \_ Neck pain
- \_ Lack of energy
- \_ Severe mood changes - feeling sad, anxious, or angry

### Danger Signs

In very rare cases, along with a concussion, a dangerous blood clot may form on the brain and crowd the brain against the skull. Contact your Doctor or Emergency Department right away if you have any of the following symptoms:

- \_ Headaches that get worse
- \_ Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
- \_ Repeated vomiting

The people checking on you should take you to an Emergency Department right away if you:

- \_ Cannot be awakened
- \_ Have one pupil (the black dot of your eye) larger than the other
- \_ Have convulsions or seizures
- \_ Have slurred speech
- \_ Are getting more confused, restless, or agitated

### Recovery

How fast people recover from a concussion varies from person to person.

Although most people have a good recovery, how quickly depends on many factors.

These factors include how severe the concussion was, what part of the brain was injured, their age, and how healthy they were before the concussion.

Rest is very important after a concussion because it helps the brain to heal. You will need to be extremely patient because healing takes time. As the days go by, you can expect to gradually feel better.

While you are healing, you should be very careful to avoid doing anything that could cause a blow to your head. On rare occasions, receiving another blow before a concussion has healed can be fatal. Here are some tips for healing:

- \_ Get plenty of sleep at night and rest during the day
- \_ Return to activities gradually, not all at once
- \_ Avoid activities that could lead to a 2nd brain injury until cleared by the Doctor
- \_ Take only those drugs that your Doctor has approved